



AOT in Action

TOURISM WORKS FOR ARIZONA!

Welcome to AOT in Action, your weekly e-newsletter from the Arizona Office of Tourism (AOT).

A Message from the Director:

Good morning.

I hope this note finds you having a wonderful holiday season with your family and friends.

Speaking of which, there are many people who will visit our state in the coming months, and decide to make their new homes in Arizona. In fact, our state's current population of six million will likely double by 2030. This surge in residents presents complex growth issues, including those related to housing, transportation, water, public lands, air quality, schools, and job centers.

To create and maintain the quality of life Arizona citizens deserve, Governor Janet Napolitano's Growth Cabinet established the Smart Growth Initiative.

Beginning in 2009, Arizona communities must complete a [Smart Growth Scorecard](#) in order to receive funds from state agencies. As a state agency, AOT will implement Smart Growth requirements into all of our grant programs.

I encourage you to learn more about this [initiative](#), and how you can successfully integrate this program into your community.

For more information on Smart Growth, visit www.azcommerce.com/SmartGrowth/.

Have a great week.

Margie A. Emmert

Margie A. Emmermann
Director
Arizona Office of Tourism

AOT News Flash

AOT's Research Section has been Updated

The following items have been updated in the Research and Statistics section of AOT's business-to-business Web site www.azot.gov.

- [Arizona Tourism Indicators 3rd Quarter 2008](#)
- [Lodging Performance November 2008](#)
- [Lodging Performance November 2008 \(By County\)](#)
- [State Park Visitation November 2008](#)

For additional information or questions, please contact Beth Billings, Research Specialist, at 602-364-3689 or via e-mail at bbillings@azot.gov.

Call for all Calendar of Event Items

The Arizona Office of Tourism is requesting 2009 event information to be considered for the Calendar of Events posted on www.ArizonaGuide.com. These items encourage tourists to experience special occasions held throughout Arizona. For events to be considered, they must be open to the public and of interest to tourists.

Submissions should include the date and year; community in which the event takes place; name of event; venue; venue address; description of event; admission, event time; phone number and/or Web site for the public to obtain additional information.

Please include your contact information along with your submission so that we may reach you with any questions we may have prior to posting your event. Photography to accompany listings may be included, and we can supply you with an image information form. If you have questions or would like an event submission form, please contact Marjorie Magnusson at Mmagnusson@azot.gov or 602-364-3695.

Don't Forget to Place Your Travel Deals Online

AOT's consumer Web site, www.ArizonaGuide.com, offers visitors a Travel Deals web page for a listing of special deals and packages. Visitors can find special offers for Bowl Games, Holiday travel and Romantic deals.

If you are a supplier, you may directly post tourism related specials, discounts or packages by visiting www.azot.gov and clicking on Travel Deals. There is no charge to list a package on the Travel Deals section. If you have questions or need additional assistance, contact Marjorie Magnusson at mmagnusson@azot.gov or 602-364-3695.

Trippin' with AOT

Toronto Golf Show Participation and Brochure Distribution Opportunity

AOT invites you to exhibit at the Toronto Star Golf & Travel Show in Toronto, Ontario, February 27 - March 1, 2009. This consumer show expects to attract more than 30,000 Canadian golfers during a three-day period. The cost is \$800 plus travel expenses and shipping expenses. Additionally, AOT is offering the opportunity to have your brochures distributed for \$250, plus shipping. Space is limited. If you are interested in participating in this event, please contact Kristy Swanson at 602-364-3696 or via e-mail at kswanson@azot.gov.

AOT to Conduct Sales Mission in Mexico

Mexico is one of Arizona's most important international markets. To further increase awareness of the Grand Canyon State, the Arizona Office of Tourism will coordinate a sales mission to Mexico in February 2009 and we would like to invite you to participate.

Each year, AOT coordinates a sales mission to reach out to the second tier cities in Mexico – cities that are not typically reached through our other promotions. This year we will target Puebla, Queretaro and Leon during a five-day mission scheduled for the week of February 23 – 27, 2009. We will host breakfast seminars in each city and invite local travel agents and tour operators to attend. Additionally we will coordinate small media luncheons with two – four journalists in each city.

For additional information and to obtain a participation form, please contact Loretta Belonio at lbeldonio@azot.gov or 602-364-3725.

Industry News

Hotels Offering New Year's Deals

Hotels and restaurants often pull out all the stops--and charge a hefty fee--for New Year's Eve celebrations. But this year many popular spots like hotels in Times Square still have availability, and some are offering deep discounts. Restaurants that host swanky New Year's Eve parties are also dropping the prices of their festivities in an effort to appeal to more frugal customers. Hotels blame the weakening economy for their turn in fortune. Until recently, business had been very strong. For years, average room rates rose, along with occupancy and profits. Then late last year, occupancy in the U.S. started to drop, according to Smith Travel Research. In October, the average rate of U.S. hotels charge per room started to fall for the first time since Sept. 11, 2001. *(Page D1, Wall Street Journal)*

Travel Demand Remains High, Competition is Strong

New research conducted by Ypartnership found that though the travel intentions of Americans remain robust, the competition for travelers is growing among travel marketers. According to Peter Yesawich, president and CEO of Ypartnership, there will be no shortage of challenges in 2009. "But the year ahead is also one that holds great opportunity for those who amend their marketing practices to reflect the manner in which consumers live, work and travel today." According to the new research, 71% of active travel households plan at least one overnight trip during the next six months, the same as one year ago. "Our most recent tracking surveys reveal there is still plenty of demand for travel services in the marketplace for those who are aggressive and clever enough to capture it," Yesawich said. (www.TravelTrade.com, 12/23; *Special to TA*)

D.C. Braces for Record Inauguration Crowd

Officials are casting doubt on an early projection that 4 million to 5 million people could jam downtown Washington on Inauguration Day, saying it is more likely the crowd will be about half that size. D.C. authorities said the earlier estimates, provided by Mayor Adrian Fenty, were based on speculation surrounding the historic nature of the swearing-in of Barack Obama as the nation's first African American president. After weeks of checking with charter bus companies, airlines and other sources, they're reassessing. The Secret Service has dismissed the high-end estimates of 4 million to 5 million people. But there is universal agreement among security officials and planners that massive numbers of people will flock to the swearing in of Obama, who had drawn huge campaign crowds.

Trains will be packed and waits for trains could stretch for hours. The roads also will be under pressure. "After events are over, you're going to have huge traffic jams," warns Lon Anderson of AAA Mid-Atlantic. "It's going to be transportation pandemonium." (*Pages A1, Washington Post; 6A, USA Today*)